

Walloon Lake Boating Access Site

June 7, 2006 Public Meeting

Boyne City Public Schools Administration Building Gymnasium

Mr. Bill Boik, Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Division, moderated the meeting, which began at 7:06 p.m.

Introductions:

- DNR Staff (Mr. Boik provided introductions of DNR staff present)
- M.C. Smith Associates and Architectural Group, Inc.

Background/Overview:

Mr. Mike Smith, M.C. Smith Associates and Architectural Group, provided an overview of the current plan as revised. A PowerPoint presentation was utilized for this component. This overview included: site location off of Sunterra Trail; county maintains Erickson Road and part of Sunterra Trail; access drive w/ 20 parking spaces – single lane ramp; no endangered species; analysis of predominant drainage; paved 22 foot wide access drive to control and prevent erosion; skid pier; barrier free access to the ramp; dredging area to 4.5 feet of water depth.

Presentation of Revised Plan (M.C. Smith Associates and Architectural Group, Inc.):

Significant plan changes include: plan would improve 1300 feet of Sunterra Trail – two 11 foot lanes; vegetate island in maneuvering area; provide access stairs to vault toilet for those not parking at the barrier free space.

Comment Period:

- Question #3 – wants to see documentation of statement as to why the site was closed.
- Department didn't have new plan on the website – feels blindsided. Plan won't be on the web until it is finalized.
- Topographical map – which part is peat/humus – consultants were asked to do the plan – operations to be determined – must have a plan first.
- We don't have any say in it being there – how does the public have impact on how it is operated?
- Resident of Bay Township – Question #38 states that currently Walloon Lake has no adequate boating access – wants a definition on adequate access – who determines and how?
- Map from Chamber of Commerce in Boyne City – supposed to have boating access sites marked for Walloon Lake, but does not.

- When the plan was developed – concentrated on DNR land – were Griffin Road and Harrison Road considered? They are county roads. Consider two-track roads into access site?
- Harrison Road is a one lane road – few 26 foot boats could maneuver there.
- All legal uses of the road will continue – anything past the boat site is illegal trespass – wants a definition of legal use. Road issue should not be confused with the project.
- No wetlands – how was that determined? Based on acreage? Nearest wetland is 640 acres from site.
- Claims there is a wetland along the bottom of the bluffs.
- Resident of township across from the lake – project is a dumb idea – not a bunch of rich people, but people who live here; concerned about pollution-lake has very low flush rate and is spring-fed; hundreds of boats on water – more will add to the pollution on the lake – urination/defecation; doesn't want a campground – welcomes responsible boaters/visitors – irresponsible government – overuse will damage Walloon Lake – will drive down property values and township revenue stream – rich out of towners won't bail the Department out – can't police it – won't police it and the township doesn't have a police car; half a dozen sites exist on lake now – kill the plan now and be done with it.
- Does DNR have a mission statement? DNR is not following that mission statement. Not preserving the environment – damaging the environment. Private sector has been generous – deeded property to the Conservancy.
- Fisherman on Walloon Lake since 1963 – sent letters to Director Humphries; DNR has not spoken about the underlying layer of clay – holds human waste, alcohol, etc. which go into the lake.
- How many boats will use Jones Landing? Parking for 5 or 6; how many are planned here (20)? What is the saturation level of Walloon Lake? DNR is convinced there will be no negative impact on Walloon Lake?
- What do taxpayers get for their money? Wants to hear absolute answers.
- You will bring in new boats.
- Have you ever changed your mind about one of these projects based on public comment; I implore you – get rid of it.
- Question #4 indicates dredging will occur – how long will the dock actually be? Typically 30 footers. Depth at end of dock? 4.4 feet. In village – are commercial launches allowed to dredge to 4.4 feet? Concerned about deadfalls – these create excellent fisheries. Will DNR pull those out?
- Resort Twp resident – wants to know how many trees will be cut for this plan? What does the \$600,000 cost include? The whole project?
- Lives on lake – misconception about the plan – not a great deal of substantive difference between this plan and the last plan; road to lake won't be paved – incorrect – it will be paved; approval process is familiar – plan has not been formally approved – is that correct? Wants a document showing the formal process. How is it going to be approved? – Requested this formal process at the first public meeting. Is there another public meeting? Who has the final word? How will the public be informed? Could it be approved tomorrow? Wants the Department to provide documentation of process. Wants people to share the

beauty of the lake with other people. Does not want this piece of property paved – wants to see current road endings improved instead.

- Resident lives close to area – not on the water – likes being able to walk the land and not see others; wants to share this with other people – wants the boat launch and supports its responsible use. Would like to see nature trails in the area – would like to organize a committee to build trails. Nature is to be used and enjoyed responsibly. With positive recreation problems decrease. Thanked the Department for hosting the public forum. Roads should be improved. What about patrol issues?
- Wants to speak for the old growth forest – important to document – Walloon Lake Association spent own money to seek advice of an expert. Sent letter to Bill O'Neil regarding the forest. Josh Cohen from Michigan Natural Features Inventory will be on site – part of Cohen letter was read. Conducted a survey of the old growth forest (high conservation value forest); believes boat launch will damage old growth forest; wants plans to be dropped and forest protected. Why isn't forest division of DNR standing here proposing protection of this forest? Have exceeded the number of boating access sites for Walloon Lake. In all due respect – doesn't see any change from last time.
- Win/win proposal – majority of people opposed to this launch – Long Lake by Traverse City only has two launches there and locals want improved boating access – DNR should go to Long Lake by Traverse City instead of Walloon Lake; county can't afford to maintain two launches; Bay Township will be improving Sumner Road – can the other road endings be closed if this goes through? Seems like my money is being wasted. If this proposal goes through, there will be two boating access sites within a ½ mile.
- For the record the Walloon Lake Association is opposed to the plan; would rather improve road endings; Feels the Association is not being heard; Suggests Association members channel comments to him and he will forward them to the DNR; wants to work on other alternatives.
- Neighbor of the property and member of the Association – have taken care of the property for a number of years – worked with Bill O'Neil to protect character of this property and stated that Bill O'Neil said that this is one of the most beautiful pieces of property in Michigan; Has seen damage – have adopted the forest – try to retain the beauty of the forest; worked with engineers all his life – can build anything – no question about capabilities of engineers – concerned that the Department is destroying one of the greatest treasure – people have access as it is – don't need changes to it such as nature trails – would be destroyed and cannot be replaced.
- Resident of Evangeline Township – have you met with all the townships on Walloon Lake to determine whether road ends can be used? Wants a definitive statement of what has been reviewed on the road ends; there is access to the lake through the road ends; eventually there will be a camp site there – all other options should be explored definitively; Something rare here but DNR has not worked with other entities.
- Resident of Bay Township – wants to know process and procedures that will be followed. Considers boating access site a degradation of the property.

- Safe access for boaters – what is the optimal number of boats on Walloon Lake for safety purposes – any studies to determine this? Concerned about safety for all users – she believes those numbers have been exceeded already. Why isn't an environmental impact study being done? Who determines environmental impact study on this project?
- Challenged statement about lake and parking on road ends.
- Gave address and email last year – hasn't heard anything from the Department. Didn't hear anything about this public meeting and doesn't receive a newspaper. Why ask for it if it's not going to be done?
- Question about environmental impact statement on frequently asked questions – states one won't be done. No meeting minutes from first public meeting were sent out – why? Proper meeting should include FMFM, Fisheries, and Wildlife so the public may address them as well.
- Lifetime boater – it's time for Walloon Lake to have a public access. Doesn't see anything at Walloon Lake. This is a large lake – it should have facilities – three sites on Walloon Lake is not a lot. There probably won't be a site in the Village. Even if there is, there should be a site on Walloon Lake – the property belongs to all the people.
- Where will dredge spoils go? What access road will be used for construction activities?
- Two weeks ago – had 30 truckloads of fill taken off his property down Erickson Road.
- Mailing list – first meeting last summer – submitted a letter wanting name of any sites that have been developed by the DNR – never received a response – still wants to hear. Wants to hear rules about launching boats, retrieving, and how late facilities will be open.
- Requested answers to questions but never got comments back. Department does not give comments back.
- Not a man of your word – 25 vehicle trailers, later 21 – you will rape this land for 21-25; claims Piping Plovers in area.
- 1999 study – no endangered species shown.
- Concerned about impact of this plan – invitation for off-road vehicles to come back – add fencing along sides of road – something needs to happen to prevent tear up of land due to ORVs, etc.
- At one time three roads were plotted to go through – looked like a city was planned for Walloon Lake – did not happen; Use existing roads – need to provide good roads and lighting – trying to say lots of people want to leave the city for something different – quiet respite putting city environment next to the lake – people are trying to protect the lake – wants to protect the land.
- People keep talking about road ends – no turn around for boat/not wide enough – in favor of this launch site – will provide parking and launch facilities and allows safe launching.

Meeting Adjourned:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.